

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT.



THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE
Library Assistants' Association.

Edited by

W. BENSON THORNE,
St. Bride Institute, Bride Lane, E.C.



NOVEMBER, 1902.

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... Contents. ...

Announcements	165
N.W. Branch	165
Study Circle	166
Inaugural Meeting	167
Notes and Comments	170
The Daily Press and Public Libraries	...					172
Technical Training of Library Assistants	...					175
Correspondence	180

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N.B.—See also "Greater London," by E. Walford, M.A., F.S.A. (page 360); "Methods of Social Reform," by Prof. W. Stanley Jevons, M.A., F.R.S., LL.D.; "Public Libraries," by T. Greenwood, F.R.G.S.; &c., &c.

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The Library Assistant:

The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.

No. 59.

NOVEMBER, 1902.

Published Monthly

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

FOUNDED 1895. EIGHTH SESSION. YEAR 1901-1902.

Members are requested to read carefully the announcements appearing on this and the following pages, as no further intimation of meetings and other arrangements may be expected.

OUR SUPPLEMENT.

We wish to call special attention to our supplement and to record our indebtedness to the proprietors of "Punch" for the great privilege they have bestowed upon us in allowing us to issue it. Permission to publish "Punch" cartoons, except after the expiration of several months, is so rarely given, that we cannot value too highly the honour accorded to us. We may safely say this is the first time a "Punch" cartoon has been presented with a professional periodical such as this, a fact which our readers will doubtless appreciate. The motive of the cartoon is one which will appeal to those engaged in public library work, and all will admire the able manner Mr. Bernard Partridge has expressed it in his drawing.

FIFTH ANNUAL DINNER.

The Fifth Annual Dinner will be held at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, E.C., on Wednesday, November 19th, at 7 p.m. It is hoped that all assistants will make an effort to attend, juniors being especially invited. An interesting musical programme is being arranged. The Committee will be pleased to welcome as many librarians as can be present, and other persons interested in the profession.

Applications for tickets (3/6 each) should be made to Mr. William J. Harris, Branch Library, Stapleton Hall Road, Stroud Green, N., who is still open to receive offers of musical help.

NORTH-WESTERN BRANCH.

NOVEMBER MEETING.

This meeting will be held on the kind invitation of C. Madeley, Esq., at the Museum and Library, Warrington, on Saturday, November 15th. Will members who intend being present please notify Mr. Madeley on or before the 12th. Train from Manchester Central 2.30 p.m., arriving at Warrington 2.48 p.m.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual Meeting will be held in the Reference Library, Manchester, during December. Nominations for Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and eight Committee men, should be made to the Secretary by November 15th. If a sufficient number of nominations are received, ballot papers will be forwarded to all members of the Branch, otherwise the election will take place in the usual way. It is essential that the majority of the nominees should be assistants within a short distance of Manchester, in order that a quorum can easily be formed.

Any notices of motion for this meeting should be given in at the Warrington meeting.

PRESENTATION TO MR. P. D. GORDON.

At a special meeting of the Committee on October 1st a presentation in the form of an Elizabethan Copper Writing Set, was made to the former Hon. Secretary on the occasion of his marriage, and in recognition of the untiring energy he displayed while he held that position.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

We announce with pleasure that the Council of the Library Association have elected on their Education Committee Mr. Evan G. Rees and Mr. Reginald B. Wood, as representing the Library Assistants' Association. This is a very gratifying result and recognition of the efforts of our Association for the improvement of the professional efficiency of library assistants. It cannot but be productive of benefit both to the Education Committee, who will thus learn at first hand the views and opinions of assistants as to their technical education, and to the Library Assistants' Association, who, apart from the satisfaction the members will feel at such an important endorsement of their *raison d'être* will receive advantage in being brought into closer touch with a body working in the same direction. For instance, it may be possible to interest the Education Committee in the question of extending to provincial assistants the benefits metropolitan assistants now derive from the classes—a work this Association, far less able, has been endeavouring to do for some time. Our Study Circle does not supply a tithe of the need, and if the L.A. Education Committee will take over the task, the L.A.A. Education Committee will cheerfully sing their *Nunc Dimittis*.

STUDY CIRCLE.

The response to the questions set in the October Journal has been fairly satisfactory, but the Committee thinks that a much larger number of assistants ought to attempt the work. It would point out to those senior assistants who evidently consider it not worth their while, that the

answering of these questions will prove invaluable practice for the "Library Management" section of the Professional Examination, as they are modelled on questions previously set and likely to be set again at these examinations. It would also point out that the Professional Certificate is likely to attain much more importance in the near future than has been attached to it, and that at any rate the more practical sections of it will probably soon be regarded as an indispensable qualification.

The replies to the October questions will be commented upon in the next number.

QUESTIONS.

- (3) Give reasons for and against the practice of inflicting fines for over-detention of books. State what you consider to be the fairest scale of fines. How would you record fines so as to be able to check at any time any disputed fine.
- (4) Draw up an imaginary Binding List of not less than twelve items, giving full instructions to binder. The list should include all probable varieties of orders.

Answers should be sent not later than the 21st inst., to Mr. R. B. Wood, Public Library, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W., signed by a pseudonym, and in the case of new students, with the real name enclosed in an envelope on which is written the pseudonym. Former students are requested to retain the same pseudonym throughout the Session.

INAUGURAL MEETING.

The first Meeting of the Eighth Session was held at the London School of Economics, Clare Market, when some fifty members and friends were present, including Sir Edmund Verney, Mr. Stanley Jast, Mr. W. W. Fortune, and Mr. F. Meaden Roberts. Mr. Lawrence Inkster occupied the Chair, and Mr. H. D. Roberts read a paper (which appears elsewhere in this issue) on "The Technical Education of Library Assistants."

In his opening remarks, the Chairman said the Library Association had not abandoned the Technical Classes, as had been suggested, but had done what they thought best in holding them in connection with, and at this School. After referring to the system of providing Classes with funds out of the rates, adopted in America, and announcing that Mr. E. G. Rees would read a paper on the same subject before the Library Association at the January 1903 Meeting, he called upon Mr. Roberts.

Considerable discussion followed the paper, and was opened in a capital speech by Mr. R. B. Wood (St. George, Hanover Square), who said he thought the Education Committee was rather intolerant of criticism from assistants, although they professed to invite it. He did not agree that the Classes about to commence would be satisfactory to all. He only asked that the Education Committee should give assistants thorough and continued instruction in the subjects of the Syllabus of the professional examinations, and arrange the Classes so that at the

end of a series the Student could sit for the corresponding section of the examination. At present there was no connection between the instruction and the examination. He did not see why the Library Association need call in the aid of the School of Economics. They were well able to bear the expense, judging from their financial statement. He could not see the practical value to assistants of the subjects in Group II. of this programme, and regarded them as the price they had to pay the School of Economics for Group I. The library assistant was not an accountant or a statistician. Local Government, Political History, Economics, Palaeography, and Diplomatic had no particular interest for him. He had more to do with modern printing than ancient writing. He simply wanted instruction in Public Library Administration, and that was apparently the one subject the School of Economics thought unnecessary for his education. It was not to the credit of the Library Association that they abandoned the charge of the professional efficiency of assistants to an alien body of peculiar views, and salved their consciences by the application of a £10 note in paying half their fees.

MR. FORTUNE said he was pleased to be at a meeting of the L.A.A. again. He was sorry Mr. Wood had taken the attitude he had, as it would be discouraging to the L.A. Education Committee. Assistants' educational facilities were much greater now than they were years ago, and they should be grateful for what was now offered them. He was sure Mr. Brown's lectures would be very valuable, and would like to attend them himself. Public libraries, he said, should be worked on a purely business footing. If some businesses were carried on in the manner some libraries are, they would be bankrupt in a very short time.

MR. CHAMBERS (Woolwich) was disappointed with the Syllabus. Failed to see that Group I. would be of much use, and thought Group II. of no use at all. Assistants would not come from the suburbs to hear lectures on history and diplomatic, when they could get them at their local polytechnic.

MR. F. M. ROBERTS (Mile End) sympathized with Mr. Wood. The L.A.A. had attacked the L.A. in the early days on this question, and now they had got so far, after several snubbings. He also wondered what the use of the subjects in Group II. would be to the average assistant. If they became thoroughly acquainted with all those subjects, they would consider themselves much too good for librarianship. The assistants of to-day would make as good librarians as those at present occupying that position, but they must be better in the future. He suggested that some members of the L.A.A. should sit on the L.A. Education Committee.

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TO LET

Applications to be made to the Editor.

MR. S. JAST (Croydon) did not agree with the objections offered, thought they were mythical. The L.A. Council should know exactly what the attitude of assistants was. Pointed out assistants need only attend those Classes most helpful to them. It was important that a University, such as this School was, should recognize library subjects. The short Classes in Cataloguing and Classification could be extended next year. These were only a foundation on which a much more elaborate structure might be built. Thought the suggestion that some assistants should be on the L.A. Council very good. Was of the opinion that assistants should study in their own libraries as well as at the Classes, and also that librarians should be *made* to teach their own assistants, and also buy all library literature for their use.

MR. REES (Westminster), MR. STEVENSON (Croydon), MR. PICKARD (Bermondsey), and MR. MCKILLOP (Librarian of the School) also added their views. MR. CHAMBERS proposed a vote of thanks to MR. H. D. ROBERTS, which was seconded by MR. W. J. HARRIS.

MR. ROBERTS, in reply, said that the L.A. Education Committee had been unanimous in their decision to arrange the Classes in connection with this School. He had no doubt whatever, that the Council would welcome assistants among their number. He believed the suggestion had never been made before, or he was sure that several assistants would have been elected on that body. Regarding "outsiders," he said he had received letters from two or three ladies asking "if they attended the course of lectures would they be guaranteed a situation at the end" (laughter).

He pointed out that the Classes were for assistants in *all* libraries, and not only for those in public libraries, so that some of the subjects would appeal to those in private or institution libraries, which would not be so necessary for the others. He echoed Mr. Jast's remark, that it was an important fact worthy of notice, that the London School of Economics, which was a branch of the London University, should provide Classes in library subjects, and students should consider it an honour to be allowed to attend them.

MR. REES proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, and after he had suitably replied, Mr. H. D. Roberts said he had received a letter from Professor Dixon, President of the L.A., wishing the L.A.A. and the Classes every success, and regretting that he could not be present.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Committee Vacancy.—At the October Meeting Mr. W. B. Thorne was elected to fill the vacancy on the Committee caused by the resignation of Mr. H. Tapley Soper.

"Sketch."—An illustrated interview with Mr. Carnegie appeared in the "Sketch" of October 8th, 1902.

Belfast.—An offer of £15,000 from Mr. Andrew Carnegie towards the erection of three branch libraries in Belfast has been accepted.

Bodleian Library.—The Tercentenary of this famous library was celebrated on October 8th and 9th, when upwards of two hundred distinguished guests from all parts of the world gathered together. A number of honorary degrees were conferred.

Brighouse.—The borough of Brighouse is one of the many places that have made application to Mr. Andrew Carnegie for a grant towards a proposed free library. The town has already a capital free library, towards which the rate contributes £330 per annum. But Brighouse wants to have a branch library at Rastrick. The reply which has been sent to the request for help is as follows:—"Dear Sir,—Yours of the 12th instant received. You state that the revenue is insufficient for the present library, there being nothing for books, etc. Being so, why need another building? Besides, in view of the number of applications before Mr. Carnegie—some 400 since July—nearly all wanting attention, he could hardly establish a precedent of giving a branch library to districts of 22,000 people, who have already one library.—Respectfully yours, James Bertram, Private secretary."

Enfield.—Mr. Carnegie has written to the Enfield District Council with regard to a condition he imposed in his offer of £8,000 for public libraries, that the sites should be provided without charge to the rates. He now withdraws this condition so far as the central library is concerned, the Council having already determined to accommodate it in some new offices they intend to erect.

Limerick.—The Corporation having agreed to make a halfpenny rate for library purposes, a letter from Mr. Carnegie was received stating that he would give £7,000 for the same cause. He added that he would accept the proffered freedom of the city, as the honour was too great to be declined.

Marylebone.—With reference to the cartoon we issue with this number, it is interesting to record that Mr. Frank Debenham has been elected a member of the Marylebone Borough Council almost entirely on the Library Question. He made this a special feature in opposition to the other candidates' "anti-library" tactics, and this Borough may have its Free Library after all.

Normanton.—Mr. Carnegie has offered £2,000 for the erection of a public library at Normanton, Yorkshire, on condition that a free site is provided.

Pendlebury.—A public library has been opened here, with a stock of 2,135 volumes.

Southwark.—A Book Club and Literary Society are to be formed in connection with the St. Saviour's Public Library. We are glad to learn that the rumoured changes in connection with this Borough's Public Libraries are not likely to come into effect.

West Bromwich.—The "Surveyor" of October 17th contains a plan of the conversion of the West Bromwich Market Hall into a public library.

AMERICAN SCHEME OF BOOK DISTRIBUTION.

The latest American invasion of London intimately concerns the book-world and the circulating library. Because it promises to find new readers and provide them with up-to-date literature in an up-to-date way the scheme seems likely to win the approval of publisher and public alike.

At No. 17 Hanover Street, Hanover Square, the Book Lovers' Library has established itself. It has taken the sign of the Tabard Inn, after that old hostelry at Southwark made famous by Chaucer in "Canterbury Tales." Old-fashioned lead-lights in the windows, quaint book-cases and decorations give a setting of repose to the lively "hustle" of the American librarians.

There are two sections of the new library, both tried with much success across the Atlantic, where over forty library centres are established in the chief cities. You can join the Book Lovers' Library for an annual inclusive subscription. For that you get a monthly bulletin of new books, from which a selection of a dozen or half a dozen volumes may be made and sent to Hanover Street. The books are promptly despatched to your house in a neat case, no charge being made for carriage. They can be renewed as desired.

"The library is differentiated from those existing here," said Dr. F. W. Speirs, one of the managers, "in that we guarantee to deliver every book that is asked for if it is on our list. If there is a boom in a book we go on buying it till the demand is met or the publisher runs dry. You understand, we are a library of new books, not of standard literature. In the monthly bulletin we give a short description of each book, so that subscribers may know what they are asking for. In a word, we digest current literature for our customers, and supply them with it at the least possible trouble to themselves."

A more popular form of book distribution is the Tabard Inn Library. Briefly, the company intends to place in attractive shops all over London a revolving book-case containing about 130 volumes. At either of the shops or in Hanover Street any one may become a life member by paying a fee of half a guinea. Then he or she purchases exchange tickets at the rate of fifteen for half a crown. Books may be taken out or exchanged at any of the shops. The subscriber brings back one volume, takes another, and drops in the slot of the book-case one of his exchange tickets. There is no surveillance of this operation, no one specially in charge of the case. It is an essential part of the scheme.

"Book-readers are not thieves," was Dr. Speirs' explanation. "Our experience in America shows that the loss on books or on exchange tickets is too infinitesimal to be reckoned."

Each volume is issued boxed in a cloth case, easy to handle and helping much to keep the book clean. On the case is an imitation band of red tape. "Red tape all on the box" is the motto of the corporation, expressing in a line the fact that there are no vexatious delays between the subscriber and his service of books.—*Daily Mail*, 29th October.

APPOINTMENTS.

Heaton, Mr. Ronald, W., M.A., formerly Librarian of the Bishopsgate Institute, has been appointed Librarian of the Government Library, Pretoria, South Africa.

Thorne, W. B., St. Bride Foundation Institute Libraries, Fleet Street, E.C., to be Second Assistant at the Poplar Public Libraries, to take charge of the Bromley Branch. [63 applications].

EDITORIAL.

THE DAILY PRESS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Owing no doubt largely to the munificence of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the Public Library has been accorded a good deal of prominence of late in the daily papers. Many and various views by all kinds of persons have appeared, and altogether the subject has received a good shaking up. As is usual when a topic of this character finds a place in the principal questions of the day, the majority of persons who give vent to their opinions are no more qualified to do so than to navigate an airship. Consequently the Public Library Movement suffers considerable opprobrium, which, if it does little harm, certainly does not do much good. When we remember the number of gentlemen there are in the Library profession who generally seem ready to take up their pen and pour forth strings of invectives against open access, indicators, catalogues, class lists, coloured labels, and other matters more or less (usually less) important, on the slightest provocation, we cannot help wondering why they do not take up the cudgels sometimes and strike a blow in defence of their profession. But we presume their



Bernard Partridge.



"CASTING PEARLS—"

Marylebone Bumble (to Mr. Carnegie). "GO AWAY, MY GOOD WELLER! WE DON'T WANT NO BOOKS 'ERE!"

[“Marylebone is not going to allow itself to be bribed, even by Mr. Carnegie, to encourage reading within its borders, and so it has declined that gentleman's offer of £30,000 for the provision of free libraries.”—*Westminster Gazette*, Oct. 1.]

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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

237





minds are comfortable in the belief that it is now firmly established and proof against these outside criticisms so frequently hurled at it. This may be so, but we confess we should like to see a little spirited response occasionally.

In the *Daily Mail* of September 8th, there appeared an article entitled "Some Evils of Free Libraries," with the sub-title "The Plague of Novel Reading," by A. T. Storey. In the *Morning Leader* of September 23rd appeared "The Free Library: Some Suggestions for the Birmingham Congress," signed "Zenodotus." Judging from Mr. Storey's views, we believe that he knows absolutely nothing about the subject at all. He complains that the stock of novels in most Public Libraries is out of all proportion to other classes of literature, that there is a distinct lack of the more up-to-date serious books, especially in science, and that new Libraries are stocked on the "so much per yard" or "shilling a volume plan." Of course, the first statement is absurdly untrue, 15 to 20 per cent. being the usual stock of novels in the average Public Library, with the expenditure on the same varying from five to ten per cent. Every level-minded individual will admit that this is an extremely reasonable proportion, and in the face of this fact, that Mr. Storey must have talked without knowing. Public Librarians, who after all may be allowed some authority to speak on this subject, are not seriously dismayed at the use made of this section of their Libraries. The novels are carefully selected, and the ephemeral rubbish of the "circulating" library finds no place on their shelves.

Surely it is better for the clerk or working girl to read a good novel on the way to and from business, than its alternative in travelling literature, the "bitty" paper. Apropos of novel reading, Mr. Storey might be interested to learn that the last Report of the West Ham Libraries shows a fiction issue of only 35.4 per cent., and the population of West Ham, it should be remembered, is largely composed of the working classes.

In the *Daily News* of October 7th we notice a letter harping on the same old string—preponderance of novels, and the issue of six novels to one work on a serious subject. Our previous remarks are sufficient comment on this.

With regard to Mr. Storey's complaint that a reader is unable to keep up-to-date in the literature of the progressive sciences, we can only say that the complaint is most unreasonable. Anything less than the British Museum or a "special" library it is impossible to keep supplied with the latest books.

The average Public Library cannot aspire to more than the standard works on every subject, and if any particular section is largely developed, it is done at the expense of the other sections, which must be manifestly unfair to a certain proportion of readers, as no library has an unlimited income.

Mr. Storey said he KNEW one instance where in stocking the library the librarian was given *carte blanche* to buy so many volumes for so much, apparently without any heed to subject, and whatever saving he could effect would be regarded as his commission. This is the first time we have ever heard of such a thing being done, and if the statement is correct, feel confident that Mr. Storey must have alighted on an unfortunate and unique instance. The utmost care is usually displayed by all who have anything to do with book selection.

The gentleman who wrote the *Morning Leader* article was certainly better acquainted with his subject than Mr. Storey. The object of the article was to bring one or two suggestions before the Congress of the L.A. at Birmingham. The writer says:—

"The L.A., it must be confessed, is a somewhat feeble concern. A chartered corporation, it is the only body, unfortunately, which can suggest legislation with authority, or work for any sort of reform. But it seldom exercises this authority. The results of its labours are so small because it can never make up its mind as to the course to be taken, whether right or wrong."

We admit we have no two opinions regarding this statement, and we hope that slow-going, ponderous organization will take the hint and wake up a bit.

One suggestion is that a "combine" of librarians should compel publishers to supply books on better made paper in sheets, at the ordinary prices. Another is that a central bureau should be established, where the cataloguing for every library should be done, so that a uniform system might prevail. Both these questions, we believe, have been discussed, and no satisfactory conclusion arrived at. The first is undoubtedly desirable, but the second is well-nigh impossible. The writer advocates the institution of travelling libraries, so widely used in the United States, for providing villages, unable to support a library with books. This will probably come in time, as the movement becomes more fully-developed. He suggests the closer relationship of schools and libraries; the suppression of the worst class of cheap literature; getting books to strata of town population still untouched, and raising the standard of reading by the organization of a lecture agency, which would send out men to lecture on books, subject by subject.

The writer has touched some very good points, and in course of time, very likely, they will in the main be realized, but the L.A. will have to exert itself in the future more than it has done in the past, before this consummation can be effected.

The *Westminster Gazette* of October 1st, commenting on the Borough of Marylebone declining the gift of £30,000 from Mr. Carnegie, says:—

"It is very remarkable to find the unanimity that is displayed by some local magnates in their attitude towards works of fiction when they are discussing a requisition to establish a Free Library. They solemnly and sternly question the members of the deputation pleading for free books on this point. 'Is it not a fact that the experience of the Free Libraries everywhere is that the great proportion of books read in those places consists of works of fiction?' This is the invariable question propounded with an air that is intended to convey sorrowful indignation over the depravity of the masses in desiring such dreadful literature. The reply is quite simple. Why should people not read works of fiction? If those works are excluded, what becomes of the great standard popular literature of the country? If a man were to abstain from the public-house and devote his earnings say to the *Waverley Novels*, would he be any the worse morally for the change? It would be no exaggeration to say that the people who are so strongly opposed to giving facilities for free reading are often the most fiercely opposed to interfering with the facilities for getting drink."

We feel this to be stating the case to a nicety, and refrain from adding anything to it.

In conclusion we would say we have reviewed the latest efforts of the Press on the Public Library Movement, from the standpoint of one who knows something of the situation, and must express our regret that certain of the papers allow their columns to be used by irresponsible persons for the purpose of throwing mud at one of the most popular and valuable institutions of our country.

THE TECHNICAL TRAINING OF LIBRARY ASSISTANTS.

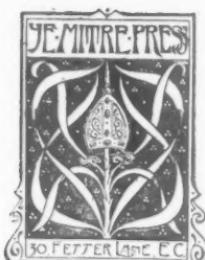
By HENRY D. ROBERTS.

Once more I stand before you, by the invitation of your Committee, to address you on the subject of the technical education of Library Assistants. I have spoken of the subject on general lines more than once: to-night I want to refer to it more particularly in connection with the technical classes about to be commenced at this Institution.

Education is very much in the air just now. The Government has produced a Bill, which, if passed, will cause a revolution in the management of schools where elementary education is given; a bill which is good, bad or indifferent according to the standpoint from which it is viewed, but to discuss which is not the purpose of this paper. The British Association devoted much time at its recent Belfast meeting to the question of higher and technical education, proving to its satisfaction that in this direction we are as a nation lamentably behind the times. But on this matter of technical education we do appear at last to be waking up, and even the library world has come to the conclusion that it is a necessity for it as well as for other branches of the public service. This awakening is of very recent growth as far as we are concerned. It is not six years ago since I entered a plea, at a monthly meeting of the Library Association, for means to be provided for the better education in professional matters of the assistants in our libraries. You will remember that the majority of the speakers were against me, although I am glad to recall that our Chairman of to-night (who has always been such a thorough supporter of your Association) was in the minority. The burden of the opposition was that assistants of previous generations had got along all right without lectures and classes, so why alter things now? That was all very well, but what was good enough ten or twenty years ago is not good enough for to-day. The times are changed, and we must change with them. Libraries, thanks to the princely munificence of a few far-seeing men, hold a different position in the public mind, taking it as a whole, than they did a few years ago. In them, as Professor Dixon observed the other day at Birmingham, many men discern a hope for the world. Even if Marylebone in its wisdom looks, so to speak, a gift horse in the mouth and refuses it, that does not alter the situation in other and more progressive places. Handicapped and hampered as libraries have nearly all been in the past, yet in return for the pittance allotted to them (a pittance fixed in other circumstances and under different conditions than prevail to-day) they have done a useful and magnificent work. It will surely not be long before Parliament removes the absurd limit which has been in force for the last fifty years, and allows an intelligent community, should it be so disposed, to spend a little more of its own money than it does now on its own libraries. Many authorities would increase the rate were permission only given. And with an increased revenue better possibilities will arise for the librarian, and more will be demanded from him. No longer being obliged to get what they can for the salaries offered, Committees will, in making better remuneration to their officers, insist on getting full value for their money. The better paid posts in the profession are not now, and will be less in the future, the rightful inheritance of assistants, merely because they *are* assistants. Many lads only take to library work "until something better turns up." It doesn't, and they drag on from year to year with every hope, but not much prospect, of getting a chief's post some day. Even those who do enter libraries because the work is congenial are not always qualified for higher positions than assistants, and junior assistants at that. A considerable number of assistants to-day should not be assistants at all,

but attendants. A Board School education is not enough for any one who aspires to be something better than an automatic machine for issuing and indicating books, whose only wish is for closing time to come, grumbling because he works a quarter of an hour a day longer than the staff at the Town Hall or a neighbouring library, who says with Mr. Mantalini in "Nicholas Nickleby" that his "life is one dead horrid grind." No, after leaving school he must still go on educating himself. To the ordinary assistant his school learning should be looked on only as a commencement, although to most, I am afraid, it is considered as a completion, of his education. Liberated from the discipline and duties of school routine, he so often casts aside his books and expects to succeed in life with only the rudiments of an education. Why, even the mechanic has to spend long years at practical technical work before he can, or is even qualified to, command a good position and corresponding wage. A doctor, a lawyer, an architect, a chemist, all have to do the same thing. And yet nine tenths of the library assistants of this country do not attempt to improve their general education, to say nothing of studying technical questions. But I laboured this question of apathy in a paper I read before you in March, 1901, and will not press it now. A good foundation—that is, a good general education—is not a desirability, but an absolute necessity, before the superstructure of advanced technical work can properly be erected. We must begin right down at the bottom, and must not be content with too low a standard. I am not speaking without authority. For the preliminary examination in general subjects which used to be held by the Library Association, and which was abolished in 1894, twenty-six candidates in all presented themselves. Of these eight failed in history, eight in arithmetic, seven in geography, and six in grammar!

I find in looking back over a paper which I read to you in October, 1895, but which was never printed, as you did not possess a journal in those days, that then as now I was pressing and insisting on this same necessity for a good general education for library assistants. You may say that I am pursuing the obvious. Possibly, but the obvious is often so obvious that it is overlooked. Take Latin for example: how many assistants know even the elements of it? And yet a good knowledge of this subject is a necessity before such matters as Palaeography, for example, can be touched with any hope of success. English literature, again, although as important a subject as an assistant can be acquainted with, is very little studied. Some may raise the bogey of long hours, and say that it is impossible for library assistants to find time for study. It is all nonsense, and I thought it had been exploded long since. The hours of assistants are not as long as they used to be, I think the average is about forty-four a week—not eight a day, less than those of the average City clerk. Besides, if any one wants to work he will soon make time, and hope, with Goldsmith, that "a youth of labour is an age of ease." Remember also Luther's famous reply to those who asked him how he had managed to find time to translate the Bible—"Nulla dies sine linea." To again quote the President of the Library Association, "It is one thing to love knowledge, to believe in ideas, and to be prepared to pay a high price for them; it is quite another thing reluctantly to admit their value and attempt to buy them cheap." We may pay a high price by giving up time quite as much as by spending money, for are we not told that time *is* money? We shall reap as we sow. Let us see to it that our sowing of the seed of technical education is thorough, on a soil well tilled by a good general education, and then we can confidently look forward to a good harvest, remembering Pope's saying that



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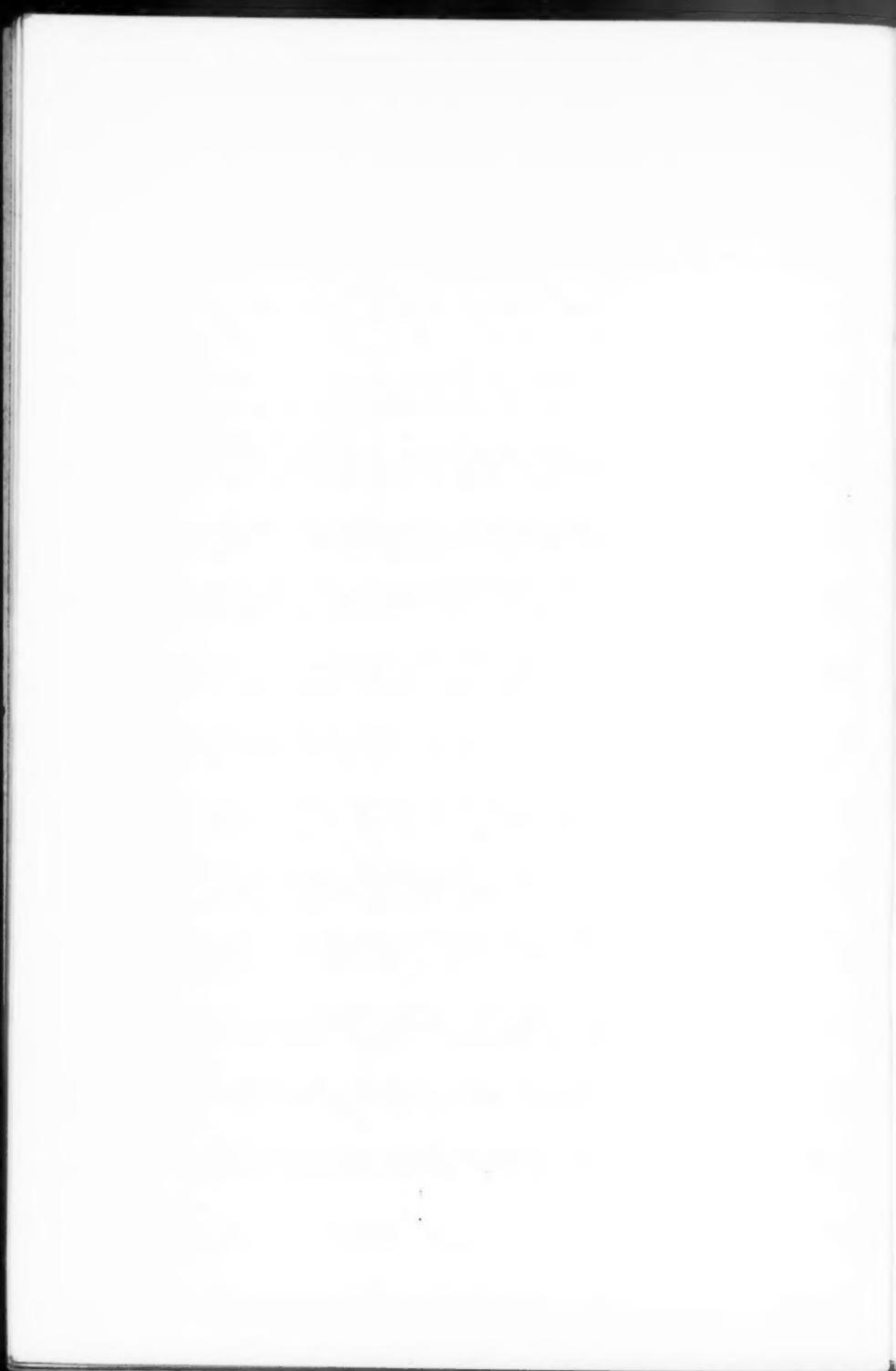
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" 'Tis education forms the common mind ;
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined."

It only wants an effort, and then, the attempt made for
"The attempt and not the deed confounds us"
we can say, as did Lady Macbeth,

"We fail !

But screw your courage to the sticking place,
And we'll not fail..."

I hope to-night that all of us will screw our courage to the sticking place, and take up more seriously than ever this question of making ourselves fitter for the work we have to do. For I maintain that we stand now at the commencement of a new epoch, and, let us hope, of a new effort of library assistants, in the matter of our technical education. I say the commencement of a new epoch, and I think you will agree with me. The Council of the Library Association has for the past five sessions, in the face of adverse criticism from places where it might have been least expected, provided classes which have been well attended. Feeling that they could not do as much as they wished in the matter of extending and amplifying their work in this direction, and knowing also the urgent need for extension, they applied to the London Technical Education Board, and offered to allow their classes to be conducted at some approved educational institution if a grant in aid could be given. This time the negotiations, previously futile, were successful, and arrangements were made for the classes to be held on broader lines at the London School of Economics and Political Science, to my mind a very suitable home for them. The Association has an equal representation with the Governors of the School on the managing Committee, and will continue to hold professional examinations. A stipulation was made and agreed to that the classes shall be open to all comers, and that the lecturers in the purely professional classes shall be nominated by the Council of the Library Association. That the step will prove to be a wise one I am firmly convinced, although again in the pages of your journal a note of opposition was uttered by an anonymous correspondent. The Library Association was charged with "a gross betrayal of the interests of assistants, and a dereliction of its duty of education." An appeal was made to the Hon. Secretary of the Education Committee to "once more re-commence his Sisyphean labours." The end of the letter answered itself. As I was in sympathy with the new movement, as well I might be, the writer might have given me credit for considering that I knew what I was about. No one has the interests of the assistants more at heart than I have, and if I approved the new scheme he might also have been sure that to my mind at least, it was a step in the right direction, for the benefit of assistants and the profession generally.

Mr. Webb, in a paper that he read before the Library Association in March last, on "The Library Service of London: its Co-ordination, Development and Education," printed in the May number of the "Library Association Record," and which you should all read, sketched what seemed rather a high ideal of the qualifications a librarian should possess. But it was only high in a relative degree; high because our conception up to now has been too low. Although in the subsequent discussion I said Mr. Webb's ideas were Utopian, I did not any the less agree with him. The change in our conception of the qualifications of librarians will very likely be gradual, but it will be sure. And these classes, to which I want to draw your attention for a few minutes, will greatly help in this direction. Mr. Webb has been called a visionary, and worse names still. I should not term him a visionary, but a man of acute vision, who can see things coming long before the ordinary person. That this is true as far as we are concerned

I am convinced, and we may all live to see his schemes and ideas for the development of our libraries, and the better education of those serving in them, accomplished facts. One cannot forget that the very idea of this School of Economics was deemed visionary when it was first mooted, but the building in which we now are is no vision but a reality. I hope soon that no appointment will be made to any position in a library until the candidate can produce satisfactory evidences of good general education; that no promotion will be allowed to take place until the assistant in question can show that he possesses, in addition, sufficient technical qualifications to fit him for increased responsibility; and that no senior appointment will be given to any person not possessing the Association's certificate, which can easily be obtained by diligent work.

In the programme, of which you all possess copies, are no less than eighteen different classes for the earnest assistant to select from, an improvement on the two or three the Education Committee were able to offer. Of these, three of course, appeal most to you. I refer to numbers one to three. Mr. Brown's class on "Elementary Bibliography" will begin on Wednesday, 15th October, and should prove extremely useful and interesting. Number two will be spread over two terms, the lectures on the "Bibliography of Special Subjects" following directly after, on the same days, the lectures this term by Mr. Brown and those to be given in the Lent term next year by Mr. Barrett. All these classes will be held on Wednesdays, and an inclusive fee of 17/6 may be paid for the whole forty lectures, which is exactly half the amount which would be charged if the different courses were taken separately. I hope I may take it for granted that you will all join these three courses. Then with regard to the others, in the second group. Bearing in mind what I said before as to the necessity for the thorough foundation of a good education, it seems to me that these remaining classes are not likely to be of much benefit to junior assistants, although they could profit to a certain extent by attending some of them, but I would recommend them very strongly to the seniors. They are all on subjects co-related to library work, and of which a knowledge, although not indispensable, would be of material advantage to those who have control of libraries. Take the first series—Palaeography and Diplomatic. Librarians of Public Libraries are not often called on to decipher ancient manuscripts, and so have as a rule very little knowledge of Palaeography. But it is a subject which all ought to know at least *something* about, and I look upon Mr. Hall's courses as second to none in the syllabus. They should be well attended. The courses in History, Economics, Geography, Public Administration, and Statistics and Accountancy will also be conducted by recognised authorities in their special subjects, and deserve your careful attention. It is intended to arrange, if possible, further courses in 1903-4, and to continue them from season to season. No doubt in the course of a year or two a definite system of training will be evolved, lasting over two or three years. I should not be surprised to find the Library Association instituting, before much longer, an advanced examination for a higher professional certificate.

As far as these classes are concerned, you will notice that the fees are higher than those charged by the Library Association. That, of course, is only natural; but the Library Association has decided to pay half the fees of any assistants nominated by one of its members. This will make the fees to senior assistants about the same as those hitherto charged by the Library Association. They will be less in the case of the first three classes referred to if all are taken, for the net amount payable by nominated students will be only 8/9, whereas for three classes with the Education Committee they would have had to pay 10/-. It will mean a little more for the juniors, but

I am sure they will have nothing to grumble at, for the classes are all well worth the money, and if a thing is worth having it is worth paying for.

Fees must first be paid in full to the Director of the School, and an application then made to me, on a form provided for the purpose, for re-imbursement of half the fees paid. This applies to any or all of the classes in the programme which assistants may join. Forms for joining the School and for applying for re-imbursement are in the room now and may be had by intending students after the meeting.

In conclusion, let me say again that I consider we have arrived at an important stage in the history of the technical education of Library Assistants. The Library Association and the London School of Economics and Political Science have done their best. It only remains for you to take advantage of the exceptional opportunities offered you, and which your brethren in the provinces will envy you, join the classes in large numbers, and do *your* share also to make them—what they well deserve to be—a great success.

BOOKS, &c., RECEIVED.

NOTE.—The Editor will be pleased to receive Library and other publications for notice on this page.

Waterloo with Seaforth Public Library. Classified List of Books in the Library, on History, Biography, and Travel. Compiled by Edith G. Taylor. 8vo., 1902.

A compilation which should prove extremely useful to the student. To each division of the section history, is appended references to biographies of the most prominent men of those particular times, which is an interesting and serviceable feature. The classification, however, shows up some sad deficiencies, especially in the biographical section. For instance, we see a life of *Mary Lamb*, but none of her brother *Charles*. There is also a life of *Susanna Wesley*, but we cannot find one of *Charles* or *John Wesley*. We congratulate Miss Taylor on her production.

Manchester Public Free Library. Quarterly Guide, Vol. vi., No. 2. [Edited by Ernest Axon, Assistant Librarian].

West Ham Public Libraries. Annual Report for the year ending March 31st, 1902.

Willesden Green Public Library. Quarterly Record and Guide for Readers. September, 1902.

"Morley College Magazine," October.

"Revista delle Biblioteche," September.

NEW MEMBERS.

Seniors.—Miss Isabella I. Henderson, Aberdeen; Messrs. Horace J. Hobbs, Enfield; Ernest S. Martin, Kingston-upon-Thames; Bertram R. Moors, Portsmouth; Thomas B. Storey, Westminster; Harold Tempest, Bootle.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTE.—Under this heading the Committee are prepared to answer questions or advise assistants, to the best of their ability, concerning any professional difficulties they may meet with. Questions must be put as concisely as possible, and replies will appear here to such as shall be of general interest. If a pen-name is used, the real name and address must also be enclosed. No attention will be paid to anonymous communications. All letters must be addressed to the Editor, who, however, does not hold himself responsible for any opinions that may be expressed.

The Editor has received an anonymous letter signed "J. L. A." bearing the post mark Wigan. If the writer will again read carefully the Study Circle notice he refers to, he will find he has misunderstood it, and that the use of text books is recommended, and not forbidden. In future the above rule will be rigidly adhered to, and anonymous communications ignored.—Ed.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT.

[**Notice to Library Authorities.**—We shall be pleased to publish under this heading, free of charge, particulars of vacancies, if full details are sent to the Editor on or before the 28th of each month.]

NOTICES.

All matter for the December number should reach the Hon. Editor on or before 20th November.

All other communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. RADCLIFFE, Public Library, East Ham, E.





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